

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St. Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Anthony Flynn. I am a Doctoral Candidate in Counseling Psychology and a psychotherapist working with US Military Veterans. I first met Hridindu Roychowdhury five years ago through the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During our first introduction at a union social in 2018, I was struck by Hridindu's compassion and attunement. Recognizing these shared values, we began organizing together and quickly became close and trusted friends. During his detention, we have remained in contact through in-person and phone visits. Given my background and experiences with Hridindu, I believe I am in a strong position to speak to his character.

Across our relationship, I have known Hridindu to be a dedicated member of our community. Together, we founded the TAA's Diaper Distribution Program that supports graduate student families with free diapers each month. In this effort, Hridindu took lead on distribution, which meant that he would load and deliver thousands of diapers -often on his own. Hridindu made himself available whenever he was needed, including on short notice. At times when I was unable to work on the program due to illness or overwhelm, I could count on Hridindu to step up. Indeed, his kindness has only been matched by his dedication to helping others meet their material needs, and I have been grateful for Hridindu's on-the-ground insights, gleaned from thoughtful conversations with our program participants.

My fondest memories of Hridindu are when we would take breaks together at the diaper bank. What would begin as strategizing about the program would often broaden to discussing social dynamics in our unions, our personal lives, and our hopes and dreams for life after graduate school. In those conversations I felt care, acceptance, affinity, and an unmatched sense of solidarity. Further, I was struck by Hridindu's own candor and vulnerability in those conversations, which empowered me to act in turn. Since we have known each other, Hridindu has been a source of compassion in my life: checking in about my experiences while training to become a therapist, welcoming me into his home for meals, and offering a listening ear during periods of adversity, such as during my divorce in 2020. This extends to our interactions since his arrest. During our last phone call, I was touched by how, even behind bars, he was so invested in hearing about me: my life, my plans, my work, my challenges, and of course, my experiences in the diaper program too.

Despite disagreeing vehemently with the acts Hridindu has admitted to committing, my overall opinion of Hridindu has not changed in the wake of his crime, given the totality of my experiences with him. I believe he recognizes and is remorseful for the pain and damage he has caused and that he will work to make amends and help heal the community he harmed. I also sincerely believe Hridindu will learn from his mistake, and that going forward he will concentrate only on peaceful and, in my opinion, more meaningful ways to improve the lives of the people in his community. As his friend and colleague, I know Hridindu to be reliable, and I have no doubt he will be conscientious while navigating his eventual release conditions. Given his deep connection to our community, I can also say with confidence that he will receive emotional support as well as accountability when he returns. I for one would be delighted to reciprocate the support and guidance he has extended me during our friendship.

Thank you for your time, labor, and consideration in reviewing my letter, and for the opportunity to speak to my experiences with Hridindu.

Sincerely,



Anthony WP Flynn

February 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

I have known Hridindu Roychowdhury since around 2005, when he was 11, through his parents. Later, in my capacity as a College Professor, Hridindu was one of my undergraduate students, as he completed his degree in Biochemistry. He was in the same student cohort as my own son, Jackson; therefore, I saw Hridindu almost continuously in the halls and classrooms of our department and knew him quite well.

As I observed Hridindu in class, he was openly helpful to other students struggling with difficult concepts. In particular, in Chemistry 433 (undergraduate Quantum Chemistry), Hridindu helped three other students: my son Jackson, Brennen, and Jimmy, who he recognized were struggling to master concepts. Since Hridindu was a Physics/Biochemistry double major, his background in Mathematics gave him additional perspective the Chemistry majors did not have. Hridindu was very generous with his time and attitude towards the other students. He spent many hours providing informal tutoring to his classmates.

I believe, given Hridindu's intelligence and ability to shoulder responsibility, as demonstrated by his completed degrees, he will be an asset to his community. He can contribute in a meaningful way to society in general, as well as in specific ways. Hridindu is an idealistic person who wants to see society improve. I sincerely believe he is a good person who made a poor decision. I feel confident that Hridindu will never make this kind of mistake again.

If I can provide any other additional information demonstrating Hridindu's excellent character and work ethic, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Lyons, Ph.D. Professor of Chemistry  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, NM 88003

February 26, 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

My name is Corinne Hale, and I'm a PhD/MPH candidate at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I have had the honor of calling Dr. Hridindu Roychowdhury a friend since 2019. Hery is a hardworking community member with a PhD in biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I know Hridindu to be a gentle, kind, and compassionate person. I would entrust Hridindu with my loved ones' lives. He exudes warmth, is always willing to lend a listening ear, and is dedicated to his community.

He has personally supported and cared for me as a friend. Hridindu and his partner Taryn visited me in the Bahamas, where I conduct research, and I spent a lovely and memorable week getting to know him. But when I developed an intense food allergy that caused me to be violently ill, Hridindu was there for me too. This was not the ideal vacation activity, but he got me in a cab, made me smile with many jokes about fried conch, and checked in on me as I recovered.

He is a profoundly thoughtful person who has opened his home to me and others in times of need. For a time, I lived near Milwaukee while seeing pregnant clients as a doula in Madison; I often had late and unpredictable schedules, and Hridindu always kept his door open for me to stay whenever I needed, without warning. These examples are simple but incredibly impactful. I am only one of many people he has cared for in and beyond his social network.

Over the last several months, Hridindu has kept his loved ones apprised of his daily habits. Hridindu remains dedicated to growing as a person through wellness activities such as daily physical exercise. He also continues to strengthen his mind through reading, writing, and drawing. To me, these small tasks exemplify the perseverance innate to his character, which bolster his capacity to serve his community in meaningful ways. One of the many things I appreciate about Hridindu is the value he places on connectedness. People are what matter to him; he has shown me time and time again that cultivating deep relationships with your friends, family, and broader community is what matters most in this life. I am confident that Hridindu will show up for his community with his signature kindness and compassion to foster social connectedness, both while he's incarcerated and after he's released.

Sincerely,



Corinne Hale

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St. Madison, Wisconsin, 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirit. We are Debasmita and Hiranya, the parents of Hridindu Sankar Roychowdhury, who has pled guilty and stands before your court to be sentenced. Debasmita, Hridindu's mom, is a Full Professor of English, and Hiranya, Hridindu's dad, is a Full Professor of Human Anatomy and Physiology, both at the Doña Ana Community College of New Mexico State University. We have been serving the small Las Cruces community with love and care since 1993. Resolutely, we worked hard to plant roots in the fertile soil of this country and build a loving home for our family. Now, however, we face an enormous challenge, and we pray that we may have the mental and physical strength to endure it.

We love our son dearly, and we would like to bring to your attention to some aspects of Hridindu's life and character that we are proud of. We do not intend to excuse his wrongdoing, but to present a more comprehensive picture of his integrity of character and commitment to positive change, which has already begun to take shape. We gave our all to raise Hridindu and his sister Indumati as upright, conscientious human beings. Hridindu's guiding principles have always been compassion and humanism, and we truly believe the acts he has pled guilty to committing are out of character and will never be repeated.

Hridindu has always been generous, both within our family and the wider community. At age five, he readily gave away his favorite toy train to a friend who asked for it, even though he later missed it dearly. His generosity continued into adulthood; even after he moved away from Las Cruces, restaurant employees around town remembered him fondly as a lovely person and generous tipper. He shared whatever money he had even when he was on scholarship or his small doctoral student budget. From volunteering in our local soup kitchen during his early school days, to doing community service in Madison, Hridindu never stopped giving back to his community. Throughout his life, he has done good without fanfare; kindness and generosity are a part of his core values.

Within our family, too, he has always made sacrifices for our well-being. Even as a child, he readily helped with household chores and projects without complaint. And as a teen, he continued to prioritize caring for his family. Once, when his ailing aunt was flying back to India, 15-year-old Hridindu made a point to accompany her to the airport, taking time away from his summer internship on the Air Force Base near Albuquerque. When she expressed concern about making it to her flight, he accompanied her all the way to her gate and made sure she made it safely onto the plane. Now, as an adult living across the country, he's remained steadfast in his love for us. In 2019, upon hearing about Indumati's sudden health crisis, Hridindu dropped everything and flew home to be with her. Hridindu cares deeply about his parents and his sister, and knows how much his incarceration has hurt us. When we spoke with him immediately after his arrest, the first thing he said was, "I'm sorry."

Since his childhood, friends and teachers were drawn to Hridindu for his gentle, humble, and sociable nature. Despite being very accomplished—a state-level swimmer, an exceptional piano player, and an excellent scholar—he remained grounded. He sees the best in others and is a pillar of support in our family. I, Debasmita, recall a difficult moment when I was passed up for a full-time faculty position, despite having a Masters' degree and extensive teaching experience. I was feeling discouraged, but when I told Hridindu, he said "Don't worry, mama, you always wanted to do more studies!" It is largely thanks to Hridindu's encouragement and unfaltering confidence in me that I chose to return to school and earn my PhD at age 59. Hridindu sincerely celebrates others; even now, for instance, his face lights up when we tell him on video about his sister's professional successes.

We would also like to highlight our son's commitment to his rehabilitation and addressing the consequences of his actions. Since his arrest, Hridindu has been reconnecting with the faith he was born into, Hinduism. One of the central tenets of our faith, Karma, teaches that we must own our actions. Hridindu understands what it means to be accountable, and has owned up to his mistakes. During our weekly video visits, he has often expressed remorse not because he is incarcerated, but because he realizes that what he did was not the right path. We are certain that following his sentence, Hridindu will redeem himself in the eyes of the law and not let you, his sister, or his aging parents down. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Debasmita Roychowdhury and Hiranya Roychowdhury

February 28, 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

I have been a resident of Madison, WI for the last eight years and met Hridindu Roychowdhury in 2016, when we were both PhD students at University of Wisconsin-Madison. In that context, I came to know Hridindu as someone who prioritized the well-being of his peers (fellow students) and community.

For example, he led a popular and peaceful campaign centered on letter writing and collaborative discussion with peers to bring the matter of graduate students' financial pressures to the attention of their supervisors, an effort which was successfully carried onward by successive cohorts of graduate students and manifested in actual and meaningful change that alleviated stress and fostered the well-being of his peers.

I've also had the opportunity to witness and personally benefit from Hridindu's compassion during this time. One summer evening, a heavily inebriated undergraduate student was walking down my street. While many people would not have given the student any attention and might have actively avoided him, Hridindu helped the student. Hridindu gave the student several glasses of water, obtained the student's home address, and paid for a ride-share so that this student could get home safely. There was no reward for his actions or compensation for his payment — Hridindu's only motivation was his genuine concern for this person's safety.

I have also witnessed Hridindu exercise moderation and listen in an unbiased manner to others even regarding issues about which he is passionate. For example, when talking through a challenging situation related to a friend's family who was initially not accepting of their (the friend's) LGBTQ identity, Hridindu was an excellent listener. He was patient and never judged or criticized the family as being intolerant. In fact, he supported the friend and family's continued connection while recognizing the dignity of each of the people in this situation and encouraged patience. His support and compassion in this situation was incredibly meaningful and effective.

I do believe Hridindu is, at his core, a kind and generous person who will continue to make a positive impact on those in his community.

Thank you,



Dana Dahhan

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Doyle C. Valley. I write this in the hope of assisting the Court to gauge the character and rehabilitative potential of Hridindu Roychowdhury. I believe that I am qualified to provide a helpful opinion based on my interactions with Hridindu, who is my daughter Taryn's life partner.

From 1997 through 2022 I was an attorney with Morrison Mahoney LLP in Boston, where my practice concentrated in the representation of professionals, primarily other attorneys and medical professionals who had been sued for professional negligence. During my time as an attorney, I became adept at evaluating the credibility and character of plaintiffs, witnesses and even my own clients.

Because of my daughter's long-term relationship with Hridindu, I have been able to interact with and observe him as he interacts with others. I have found him without fail to be kind, polite and respectful. Hridindu is thoughtful, intelligent and self-deprecating. Present circumstances notwithstanding, I have never known him to exercise poor judgment.

I have no doubt that Hridindu has reflected and will continue to reflect on his actions. I have no doubt that any remorse he expresses will be genuine and heartfelt. I have no doubt that once Hridindu has been released from prison, his community will be enriched by his presence.

Sincerely,



Doyle C. Valley

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Eddie Rashan and I am a research scientist with a doctorate in Biochemistry. I first met now Dr. Hridindu Roychowdhury during graduate school orientation, quickly bonding over our mutual love for food, music, science, and cracking jokes. Over the last seven years, Hridindu and I became very close friends. I would like to share some examples that have demonstrated to me Hridindu's stellar character and positive impact on my life.

Hridindu is a deeply compassionate person that is committed to supporting others in his community. In graduate school, Hridindu was involved in our department's student-led committee. This group met several times each semester to discuss actionable plans related to trainee well-being and scientific training. Hridindu also spoke up about broader issues affecting our students, both financially and structurally. This advocacy promoted necessary conversations among faculty and students. I found his voice to be inspiring, as I am someone who wants to improve our academic system.

Hridindu has a natural ability to bring people together. A few years ago, Hridindu started a Monday night chicken wing club and asked me to join. For weeks, I told him no. I did not find wings appealing, especially extremely spicy ones; moreover, I felt like I needed to reserve those nights for work. It eventually got to the point where he would creatively weave in the idea of chicken wings into almost all our conversations. I finally decided to join, and I wish I had said yes sooner. The wings were delicious and the camaraderie allowed me to separate myself from the stress of work. We looked forward to these nights because it gave our group of friends who started graduate school together an opportunity to catch up.

After our first year, my mother was diagnosed with an aggressive internal melanoma. During this time, Hridindu was a key support for me. I confided in him about the evolving uncertainties my family faced, and he helped me navigate the unimaginable possibility of losing one of the most important people in my life. Being his compassionate self, he checked on me and the well-being of my family regularly. Two years after the diagnosis, my mother passed away. Following this loss, Hridindu remained committed to supporting me, even attending my mother's wake hours away to express his condolences to my family in person.

Since his arrest, Hridindu and I have kept in touch. Despite these difficult times, Hridindu never hesitates to ask about me and my family, as well as others in our community. He always offers so much encouragement as we continue forward in life. It has been great to see Hridindu foster his love for books as well as his new craft in drawing. I love talking with him about our future and what we hope to accomplish, including our dreams of being fathers one day. I look forward to the day that we can be reunited, and hopefully even enjoy a basket of chicken wings together.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Rashan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Rashan, Ph.D.



Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

My name is Erik Yukl. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at New Mexico State University, where I have been employed since 2013. Hridindu Roychowdhury was an undergraduate at NMSU, double majoring in Physics and Biochemistry. I met him during my first year as an assistant professor, and I was thrilled when he decided to start working with me on my research. At that time, he had a massive head of hair trailing to his waist. He must have been growing it for most of his life. One morning, he walked into the lab nearly unrecognizable with a crew cut. He had cut and donated all that hair to Locks of Love, a charity that makes hairpieces for children who have lost their hair due to chemotherapy, other illness, or accidents. Over the next few years, I would learn that these acts of spontaneous kindness and generosity were typical of Hridindu's character.

Hridindu worked in my lab until his graduation from NMSU in 2016, contributing to three publications in top-tier journals, a remarkable achievement for any student but particularly for an undergraduate. He rapidly developed expertise with complex biochemical and analytical techniques and demonstrated himself to be an excellent scientific researcher, as evidenced by the fact that he then went on to a graduate program at the University of Wisconsin, one of the best in the country. His kind of talent is rare, and a significant asset to the nation's biomedical research enterprise. He certainly played a critical role in getting my research program off the ground.

During the nearly 3 years that he worked for me, I grew to know Hridindu very well. When my wife and I would leave town, we had Hridindu stay at our house to keep an eye on our pets because we trusted him implicitly. Even after he left for graduate school, we would get together for dinners when he was home to visit his parents. In all my interactions with Hridindu, both inside and outside of the lab, he demonstrated himself to be considerate, empathetic, and genuinely concerned for others. These personal attributes combined with his obvious intelligence make him a benefit to the community.

If you asked anyone working in the NMSU Chemistry Department from 2013 to 2016 what they thought of Hridindu, the answer would be unanimous: "Here is a great kid with a bright future." Irrespective of any rash or ill-advised decisions he may have made, I feel confident that he will learn from his mistakes and will still make the most of his future once he is released. If there is anything additional that I can provide to attest to the quality of his character, I am happy to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erik Yukl', with a stylized, flowing script.

Erik Yukl, Ph.D.



Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Gianna Davis, and I am writing to share my insight into the character of Dr. Hridindu Roychowdbury. Hridindu and I met a year ago and have developed a close relationship since then. We talk on the phone 4-5 days a week and regularly write letters. Though we have known each other for a relatively short time, Hridindu has quickly become one of the most important and trusted people in my life, someone I go to for advice, support, and because he is truly lovely to be around.

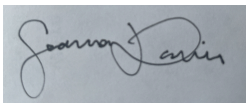
The first night I met Hridindu, I learned much about his temperament and character. We were both attending a concert alone. After chatting a bit, we decided to hang out together. Later, I had an immense panic attack that left me unable to talk much and barely able to stand. Despite only knowing me for an hour or so, Hridindu helped me get somewhere safe to sit down, made sure I had water, and gently asked me questions about my interests until my anxiety ebbed. Everything about his care in that moment felt imbued with the warmth I now know to be his general character. He takes time to sit with a near-stranger to make sure they are safe, and the calmness and gentleness he exudes lets you know that you are safe with him. Over the past year, I have seen this gentle side of him coming out even more.

Hridindu is making the most of his time in jail, working to understand the impact of his actions on his loved ones and the broader community of Madison, both of which he deeply treasures. I see a person who is humble, growing, and recognizing the value and importance of community in his life. Often, he makes connections between his loved ones. For example, when I visited Madison for a convention, he set me up to meet some of his friends and his two beloved cats. Even though he was unable to be there when I visited, Hridindu made me feel so welcome and taken care of. I know Hridindu is not willing to do anything that will put his future with his loved ones and community further at risk.

While detained, Hridindu has also been working to explore different sides of himself. Hridindu recently told me how he and his fellow inmates have been making origami together, and their block is now decorated with paper cranes, "because if you make 1,000 paper cranes, you get a wish." He and I have been writing a shared science fiction short story together through our letters, one chapter at a time, taking place on a space outpost on a distant mountainous planet. Hridindu has also expressed interest in learning more about the social sciences, which as a social psychologist, I have been happy to support by sending articles and other resources. Recently, Hridindu and I have discussed talking about issues he cares about with his peers who may hold different views. I have seen him approach others with warmth, generosity, and patience, even if he disagrees with them on certain issues. He's also been drawing amazing portraits of his peers, paired with stories about their lives he has gathered through their conversations. This project has been such a beautiful way of integrating art with Hridindu's seemingly endless empathy and curiosity. I'd be delighted to have him in my research lab once he's out, and my work would be more heartfelt and reflective because of it.

I plan to have Hridindu in my life for the rest of my life. I know he is going to continue to grow and to use his time to become his best self for when he returns to his loved ones and community. I look forward to supporting him in all of his future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gianna E. Davis", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Gianna E. Davis

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Indumati Roychowdhury, and I am writing about my brother, Dr. Hridindu S. Roychowdhury. I hope to emphasize the care, respect, and honesty that my brother exemplifies and attest to the fully genuine remorse he feels for his actions. As his sister and lifelong friend, I feel strongly that I know his character very well and attest to his goodness. I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Davis, where I study wetland restoration and natural disaster risk to communities. Hridindu has always been my academic role model, encouraging me to pursue higher education and strive to improve the world. When I was in high school and he was in college, Hridindu would often sacrifice entire evenings to tutor me in Calculus. Each time I felt stupid or incapable (which was often, and frequently ended in tears), he always gently insisted that I was smart, talented, and fully able to learn difficult things if I was willing to work hard. Even now, he is always ready to commiserate with me on the phone about grad school. It is largely because of him that I have the confidence, drive, and knowledge to achieve my goals.

Throughout my teens and early twenties, I struggled with anorexia; my brother was always extremely supportive of me, encouraging me to seek therapy and heal. He was always there to lend a listening ear, ready to pick up the phone or fly out to see me at a moment's notice. When I was in high school, he regularly bought season passes for the El Paso Symphony for us so we could spend quality time together every month; most college-aged boys would not have put this amount of thought and care into hanging out with their little sister. When I was in college and he had moved to Madison, Hridindu showed up for me in times of crisis. In 2017, during a difficult breakup, he flew me to Madison for a change of scenery, hosting me and surrounding me with his friends. Two years later, after I was briefly hospitalized, he flew back to New Mexico. During my recovery, we played video games together like Pokémon, just like when we were kids (annoyingly, he tends to win). Whenever he's home, he picks up a new and fun food to cook for our whole family—I remember a particularly delicious ramen dish one Christmas. Despite playful big-brother teasing for my vegetarianism, he always took great care to include meatless options for me. I have seen him repeatedly extend this same care and helpfulness to those all around him, from dropping everything to help a friend with a car stuck in the mud to letting people stay at his house whenever they need. Though his incarceration has been difficult for him, he has remained upbeat and expressed selfless concern for the emotional well-being of his many loved ones.

I was upset, panicked, hurt, and angry when I found out what he had been accused of and ultimately pled to. What Hridindu did was unacceptable and he is extremely remorseful. He is acutely aware that the mistake he made is not the way forward to a more just and equitable society. I know this one regrettable incident does not exemplify his character, because I know my brother: I know that his true priorities are to help his community. He would *never* want anyone to feel hurt or unsafe and is actively invested in learning from his mistakes. We have talked about the jobs he might pursue after his rehabilitation—he is excited to work in a kitchen as he has always loved feeding people.

Hridindu knows our family has been profoundly affected by his mistake, and I know for a fact he has spent this entire period reflecting on his life and his actions. He cares deeply about our family and the family he hopes to start with his partner Taryn and their two cats. I fully and confidently believe that my brother will continue to use his time to become the best version of himself. When he gets out, whenever that may be, I will be ready to hold him accountable to living a law-abiding life moving forward. I am even willing to relocate to be near him and support him however he needs.

Sincerely,



Indumati Roychowdhury

January 22, 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

I, James Carlson, have been friends with Hridindu Roychowdhury for five years. I know him to be an incredibly smart, warm, funny, and compassionate young person with tremendous potential and a passion to serve his community. I also know he regrets and has learned from his mistake.

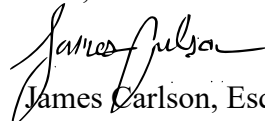
The first time I met Hridindu, in Spring 2019, we were enrolled together in a week-long “bootcamp” for graphic design and web programming skills. Hridindu seemed shy at first. Like me, he didn’t have a strong background in the subjects; he was a biochemist and I was an attorney, but both of us were excited to learn new skills and ways to serve our communities. It was an added challenge that Hridindu met head on, throwing himself into the course work before delivering an impressive presentation of his cohort’s web design project at the end of the week. By this point, Hridindu had also seemingly befriended every student and teacher at the gathering. At the final dinner, to rousing cheers, he stood up on the dinner table and delivered a gracious and hilarious toast to the program’s organizers. I remember feeling like I was watching someone emerge as a leader. I knew we had to stay friends, and felt excited for his future.

Through our friendship, I’ve gotten to know Hridindu’s parents, partner, and wider community. He and I video call regularly since he’s been incarcerated, and I’ve been inspired by his continued positivity and concern for others. He always asks about me and my family and remembers what I’ve told him. He is curious about new ideas and perspectives, and sees the world with nuance and sophistication. Indeed, he has already begun outlining a book he plans to write about his fellow inmates’ experiences of incarceration.

Hridindu remains deeply supported by his community, and remains dedicated to supporting us in turn. Hridindu is a kind, intelligent, and hardworking young man with boundless potential and passion for social justice. Despite his one regrettable action, Hridindu has incredible potential to do good in the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

  
James Carlson, Esq.  
Brooklyn, NY

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is John Walker and I am a recent graduate with a Masters degree from the iSchool at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Now, I work at Liberty Hall Historic Site in Frankfort, Kentucky. I first met Hridindu Roychowdhury through a mutual friend helping create Covid lockdown care packages for graduate students with families. We soon became friends as we lived not far from each other at that time. He and his partner would have me for dinner multiple nights a week and on really cold nights never hesitated to offer me a spare bed so I did not have to go walk home in sub-zero temperatures. During this time I spent more time with Hridindu and Taryn than anyone else, and I consider myself well aware of his character. In this time I saw how he lived with his partner, kept friendships and took care of the two cats at the house. I honestly have only on the rarest occasion met someone as accepting and caring as him. His ability to love unconditionally is the keystone of his character; something I aspire to.

His kindness and friendship helped me get through my last, toughest year of graduate school. And when my mother passed away just months before my graduation I saw he had sent flowers to the funeral in Kentucky. Even after only knowing him for just a year or so. It was the kindest act a son in grief could receive from a friend.

I was not the only recipient of this kindness and friendship. In a city where many people found it hard to make connections just due to the nature of graduate life, I never saw Hridindu waver in his altruism. I have seen him leave in his pajamas in the middle of the night to be a sober driver. I have seen him cook bulk meals for those who have food insecurity. I have watched him offer rides to the Chicago airport when someone only had the bus as an option. And the list goes on and on. Please consider the merits of character I have listed when applying sentencing to my dear friend and a staple member of this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD Walker', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Douglas Walker

26 February 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St. Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

I am writing to share my personal knowledge of Hridindu Roychowdhury. My name is Kathleen McGinn and I am the Cahners-Rabb Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. The act Hridindu has taken responsibility for is a mean and harmful act, but the person whom I know Hridindu to be is a good, kind, and caring man. I would like to offer a few personal examples that capture the man I know him to be.

I met Hridindu in 2017, when my daughter Taryn was in her first year in her MD/PhD program. She had told me how he cared for her immediately after they met, while she recovered from mononucleosis. I've gotten to know him well over the intervening seven years, as they've supported each other through challenging times in their respective graduate programs and in Hridindu's job. They planned to start a family after Taryn finishes her field research in Guatemala later this year.

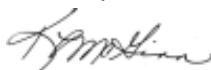
In 2019, Taryn and Hridindu visited my parents in Seattle. My mother had congestive heart failure and was in hospice at home. My sisters, my niece, Taryn, and I were taking shifts helping my mother. Hridindu joined the care rotation during his visit; he was the only man in the family to step up in that way. My mother was completely taken with him. After his visit, my mother – an often-cynical person who read people well – told me he was the “gentlest guide” she'd ever had.

More recently, in March 2023, Hridindu stayed with my husband and me in Boston, on his way to visit Taryn in Guatemala. He was arrested after I dropped him off at Logan airport. On March 27th, as we walked through the city, a man asked us for money for lunch. Hridindu replied, “I don't have cash, but I can buy you lunch with my card.” The only thing Hridindu said to me afterwards was a comment about the cruelties of poverty. He is not someone who talks about kindness; he just treats people kindly. I acknowledge that the act he's taken responsibility for is the antithesis of a kind act and it goes against so much of what I believe, but this act is not who he is. In all of my interactions with him and my observations of his interactions with others, he has shown himself to be a thoughtful and caring man.

I visited Hridindu at the Madison jail and we now talk regularly by phone and video. He shares what he's learning about himself over the last year in jail and how he spends the hours and days. He asks about my family and my days, and we talk about books and exercise, the outdoors, my research and classes. I'm struck by his ability to remain open and calm, to retain his sense of self and his care for others. He has shared his respect for the tough job the guards have and his sadness that many of those in jail with him have had such rough lives and so little support from family and friends. He consistently closes with how grateful he is for my love and support.

He understands – and is deeply sorry – that his actions have hurt so many people, starting with those who own and run the organization he harmed and extending far beyond his immediate family and friends. But Hridindu knows his large circle of family and friends love him, and that knowledge keeps him going and now shapes everything he does and will do. I fully believe that the love we share with him reflects not our generosity, but the love and goodness and support we get back from him. Thank you for giving this letter of support your full consideration as you weigh your decision.

Sincerely,



Kathleen McGinn

William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Kerida O'Reilly. I am a physical therapist and business owner in Madison, WI. I am also active in community care helping those who are food or housing insecure get the resources they need through volunteering and direct action. I met Hridindu in 2020 when we both volunteered with a community organization that got groceries, supplies, and monetary help to community members in need during the COVID 19 lockdown. We were both involved in this group for the 6 months that it was active.

During my time working with Hridindu, I knew him to be generous, compassionate, and hard working. He demonstrated this by cooking and packaging large batches of food on several occasions, which I and others picked up and delivered throughout the community. This work required us to follow changing health and safety guidelines and to communicate clearly with each other. I remember one time when I was picking up food from Hridindu, I had the address wrong and was quite flustered. He calmly gave me the correct location and was very kind to me when I arrived. His kindness helped me to calm down and continue my route for that day.

Since that time, although I have had little direct interaction with Hridindu, we have been in the same communities and I would not hesitate to call on him in a time of need. Even though he made a mistake, I believe that he is committed to helping and bettering his community and that he cares deeply for the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KERIDA' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kerida E O'Reilly, DPT

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Madison Lands, MSW, MPH. I am a researcher at the University of Wisconsin. I am writing a letter of support for Hridindu Roychowdhury. I have known Hridindu since January 2022, and have worked with his partner since January 2021. Since moving to Madison in August of 2021, I feel that the two of them have been intentional in bringing me into their community and making me feel at home in Wisconsin. I feel like I know Hridindu well because we have had many important, sincere conversations, and I know that Hridindu is someone who makes everyone feel seen and cared for.

Hridindu is deeply committed to caring for his friends and broader community, as I know many other letters have attested to. In the summer of 2022, I was particularly isolated after a breakup, and (even though our friendship was still blooming) Hridindu made sure to invite me out to make new friends and stay in good company. He has also talked me through job woes frequently over the last few years, as he is very aware of workplace dynamics within academia. While these may seem like regular occurrences, I want to stress that Hridindu has met me with empathy and understanding at each turn, reminding me of my value and resilience. That is to say—where others may merely commiserate, Hridindu is able to provide space for growth and healing. He is capable and gifted at engaging in emotional, meaningful conversation.

Hridindu is one of the most generous people I have ever met. Our first interaction was when he provided essential research administration support, creating a dataset for a project, without expectation of credit or payment. He is giving of his resources, and more so giving of his time. Hridindu and I bonded early on about our childhoods spent playing piano and participating in the same regional competitions; when I bought a secondhand piano online, he helped me unload it and get it set up in my house. More, when I took him out to get a drink to say thank you for his time, he slyly paid the bill before I was able to.

Over the last year of his incarceration, there are obvious changes in Hridindu—no substance use, limits to how he can spend his time—but I have also seen him adapt to his circumstances. I've seen Hridindu delve into himself and commit to using his time well. He is reading, he's writing, he's learning new skills. I can see that he is trying to stay on track and prepare himself to live a meaningful life when he is released from prison.

He is also maintaining strong relationships with his friends and family. One of his biggest concerns has been how the people who love him have been holding up in his absence. In each conversation we have, he checks in on how I think other people are holding up, and requests that I check in on someone. This is a man who cares deeply about the people he knows and loves, and is cared deeply about by the people who know and love him.

I thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Madison Lands". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Madison Lands



Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Dr. Mark Klein and I was a colleague and friend of Hridindu's through graduate school, starting in 2016. Following graduate school, I was lucky enough to have Hridindu as a coworker at Promega Corp as we both started our post-graduate careers in biotechnology. Throughout graduate school, I saw Hridindu at least once a week at work, and gathered socially around once a month. Since starting work together at Promega I had the pleasure of interacting with Hridindu every day. I believe I have a good sense of Hridindu's character from spending this time with him professionally and personally.

Hridindu is someone whose presence I have cherished. Our conversations are always engaging, intellectually stimulating, and amusing because of his warm-hearted and goofy nature. We'd just as easily talk about the implications of using large language models and artificial intelligence to engineer proteins as we would which type of glue to use on open grain wood joints. His genuine curiosity pushed him to read a little bit more and delve a little bit deeper in his quest to understand and engage the world around him.

Grabbing a quick bite to eat in the middle of a busy day with Hridindu is something I regularly looked forward to. When I was struggling with my own project at work, Hridindu was one of the first people I would go to and bounce ideas off. I remember having difficulties with a biochemical experiment I was conducting where it was hard to clearly interpret my data. I mentioned this to Hridindu and he quickly came up with an idea for an additional control reaction I was able to run which allowed me to make sense of my data! He has a knack for being able to zoom out on a problem, see the bigger picture, and give great scientific insights and support. We also both dabbled as beginner woodworkers and Hridindu was quick to share his knowledge and was willing to meet me at whatever time of day to help me use equipment I was unfamiliar with. Hridindu is just generous and selfless that way.

Hridindu has a caring network of friends in the Madison, Wisconsin area, and he often described building a life here for himself and his future family. For all the light-hearted moments we have shared, I could tell how seriously he cares about nurturing a happy and healthy life for himself here. Despite what has transpired over the past year, I can't imagine him giving up on that dream. I know the day will come when Hridindu can reembark on the life he has envisioned for himself and his family. I eagerly await the day I can share a meal with Hridindu while he teaches me something new about the world, whether it be a profound reflection on this period of his life or a clever new type of joinery he found in a woodworking magazine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Klein', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Mark Klein

March 3, 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Megan Spielbauer Sandate, and I currently work at the Tenant Resource Center as the Finance Manager. I have been a resident of Madison for the past five years; I moved to Madison to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison for my undergraduate degree, which is partly how I met Hridindu. Back in 2020, I was organizing with fellow undergraduate students regarding the University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as was Hridindu with members of the UW–Madison Teaching Assistants’ Association. Our paths crossed as a result of our mutual advocacy. From first meeting Hridindu, I knew that he carried an open and peaceful energy. In a tension-filled crowd, seeing him would bring me a sense of reassurance as I knew there was a person I could trust to care for me and my well-being.

Hridindu has a strong sense of community and is always willing to help another person. At a potluck my roommate and I were hosting, Hridindu came and saw we were having tacos. He then realized there was no cilantro and onion, and he immediately asked for the ingredients and started chopping. While other folks were already eating and getting their plates, he was helping us to complete the set-up for the meal, somewhat to my dismay as a host. However, I knew then that he was someone I wanted as a friend because he knew how to help without being asked.

Speaking of food, during one of his mother’s visits to Madison, he invited my roommate and I over for dinner so we could try their biryani. The meal was delicious, as were the leftovers he sent home with us; more importantly, it was such an honor to meet his mom and see where some of his inquisitiveness and calm energy came from. Hridindu makes you feel like you can tell him anything, and he is the type of friend who remembers what you share, asks questions, and follows up about it.

Hridindu’s strong sense of community and commitment to fostering community have continued through his arrest and court proceedings. Following his arrest, I had the opportunity to meet more of his friends from other contexts. During one of my visits at Dane County Jail, I shared with him how much I enjoyed getting to know all of his friends. He was so happy to hear that we were all spending time with one another, even if he was unable to participate in it. For him, the idea that the various people in his life were coming together was fulfilling. From talking to him, I know that he has used his time in jail to build stronger relationships with his family and friends. I feel confident he will use his time in prison to continue building community and caring for the people in his life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Spielbauer Sandate', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Spielbauer Sandate

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court, Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St. Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

My name is Miranda, and I am a graduate student studying Renaissance literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I have lived in Madison for six years. I first met Hridindu, a fellow graduate student, on campus in 2018. We have been friends throughout that time. I know that Hridindu did something wrong, and I still believe that this community really needs him.

Hridindu is a selfless person who really wants to help others. One of my favorite memories of Hridindu is from when I volunteered with the TAA, the graduate student union we were both a part of for several years. There was a knock on the door; I opened it, and there Hridindu stood, beckoning us outside to help. His truck was a sight to behold, the bed stacked high with thousands of neatly-bundled diapers. Hridindu was the muscle behind the TAA's diaper program, a charity to get free diapers to student parents. Working day and night on research and thankless under-paid jobs and parenting in spare moments, student parents are stretched very thin. The program always had a hard time finding volunteers to help because the work was time-consuming and physically taxing, but Hridindu was always there to help. Though he didn't share their experience, Hridindu would go solo to pick up the diapers for these parents and adamantly wave away any thanks. The parents, he said, deserved to have some rest, and to be served.

I would come to personally appreciate Hridindu's support and kindness later, during the pandemic. Incredibly tired and burned out, unsure of myself and devastated at my failings as a leader and teacher, I turned to my friend. Hridindu sat me down at his home and cooked me spicy chicken, the most delicious meal I'd had in a long time. He played music that helped calm me down; I treasure those bands (the Highwomen in particular) to this day. With him taking care of me, I felt relief.

Hridindu is very community-minded. One time, our mutual friend Miles became homeless and stranded in Madison. Hridindu picked him up immediately, invited him to stay in his home for several days with no questions asked, and helped transport his things. I know many people that Hridindu helped like this. His home was open to all: old friends and new would drop by in a single night, all welcomed, fed, and invited to stay. Hridindu is compassionate, generous, and reliable: our community needs him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miranda Alksnis', with a stylized, cursive script.

Miranda Alksnis

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

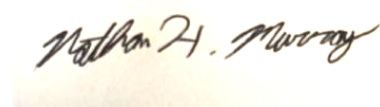
My name is Nathan Murray, and I am a research scientist in the biotechnology industry. I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Hridindu Roychowdhury, PhD. I have known Hridindu since the Fall of 2016 and we worked together during our graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as in the biotechnology industry after we graduated. In this time, Hridindu has been both an exceptional colleague and a great friend.

Hridindu is a hardworking, talented individual who has been an asset to any research team lucky enough to have him. He made important discoveries during his Ph.D., leading an investigation into a family of proteins called caspases, with the ultimate goal of improving our ability to treat human diseases that involve these types of proteins. He continued his work as a determined and creative researcher in the biotechnology industry, providing innovative solutions to questions in the life sciences sector. Hridindu has also been an outstanding member of the scientific community. We volunteered together for a year on the biochemistry Student-Faculty Liaison Committee, a group aimed to provide opportunities for professional development and service to the biochemistry community at UW-Madison. He also served as a teaching assistant, where I was lucky enough to lead a lab course with him. Hridindu was an excellent TA, not only because of his deep knowledge of the subject, but also because of his gentle demeanor and patient way of guiding stressed and overwhelmed undergraduate students. Students I talked to described him as knowledgeable, kind, approachable, and helpful.

In addition to being a first-rate scientist, Hridindu is a kind and caring person who is dedicated to his friends, family, and community. During my first week at my first job out of graduate school, I was pretty overwhelmed; I had no idea how to order supplies for work, and everyone on my team was too busy to teach me the process. Even though I was on a different team, Hridindu set up an hour-long meeting to walk me through the process, so I could start my projects. Another example was last year when my car was in the shop for a week. Without a second thought, Hridindu offered to drive me to and from work until my car was up and running, even though I was well out of his way. I was able to avoid a 40-minute bus route with transfers during a cold Wisconsin winter thanks to him.

Since his arrest, Hridindu has been making the best of his time in jail, despite the difficult circumstances. He has been reading extensively and always updates me on the latest books he's been working through. He is a lifelong learner, working on his artistic endeavors through drawing portraits of friends and family and even learning Tai Chi from a fellow inmate. He is an endlessly positive person, who I have no doubt will continue to grow, develop, and learn during his time in prison. Overall Hridindu is a joyful, kind, and caring individual who will be missed dearly during his time away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan H. Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nathan H. Murray, Ph.D

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

I am writing this letter as a dear friend and cat foster parent for Hridindu Roychowdhury. I would like to attempt to share with you my estimation of Hridindu's character, particularly his depth of kindness. I've known Hridindu for three years, and have been lucky to see his kindness and caring. Hridindu has always shown up for me as a friend. He was there for me the week I tore my ACL early last spring-- right before his arrest, Hridindu spent hours walking my dog and being a reliable person for me when my entire world was turned upside down.

Those were the last times I saw him in person, but I've been able to get to know him deeper through weekly video chats and caring for his two cats, who I've adopted while Hridindu and Taryn have both been away. The cats share his playful curiosity, his fierce loyalty to their family, and his love of really good snacks. He probably isn't a fan of chicken in a tube, but I can see his face light up watching them devour theirs. When Hridindu and I meet via video chat weekly on Saturdays, it seems like the cats know it's that time of week where they get to see him. They don't understand, but I know it helps him to see that his favorite animals are doing well. His care for them was always evident, and it is reflected in their poise and confidence.

Through meeting his other friends, I've heard dizzying amounts of stories that reinforce my belief in his kindness, admiration of his willingness to go the extra mile, and funny memories of dinners shared. His impact is wide, but obviously deeply individually felt. Even video chatting with him for thirty minutes shows me that he is continuing his curiosity and compassion while in jail. He always has questions for me about what we talked about last time, or a new thing he learned that he is eager to share. I see in our conversations how he prioritizes helping others, making new memories with old and new friends alike, and sharing his joy with anyone who he can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robbie Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Robbie" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and "Williams" follows in a similar but slightly smaller script. The ink is dark and the background is white.

Robbie Williams

March 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Robin Hurst, and Hridindu and I worked in the same laboratory at a biotechnology company for about a year. He was one of the most interesting young scientists I have had the pleasure to work with, mainly because of his broad interests that range from woodworking to farming to passionately helping the downtrodden. I'd like to tell you today what I learned about his character from working with him.

Hridindu shared with me that his woodworking endeavor started during Covid when he decided he needed to be able to do something meaningful instead of sitting at home, so he joined a woodworking co-op in Madison. The co-op has all the tools available and if needed provide training in doing woodworking. Most people would start with a small project, but Hridindu made a beautiful dining room table.

Hridindu is well-read and has the canny ability to offer unique perspectives and/or creative solutions to science problems. This is exemplified by Hridindu helping us solve a problem, with a simple solution. Our smaller group works on proximity labeling or having the ability to find a protein's neighbor in a cell. Hridindu worked in the group that was responsible for protein evolution. During one of our larger meetings, we were discussing results/problems in which we were only observing self-labeling; we had not yet identified a solution to look at the nearest neighbor biochemically. Hridindu spoke up and said, "just use an antibody." In our field, this approach is simple, but none of us had even considered it. Hridindu's creative suggestion helped us design a quick and easy biochemical proximity labeling assay.

Another example of his creativity is his ability to write computer programs for scientists who have large data sets. Most biochemists and cell biologists have no idea how to write computer programs, but Hridindu took it upon himself to write programs for protein evolution scientists. Alongside the hard work he did in getting his PhD in a very specific field of biochemistry, he has academic and personal interests across the spectrum, and he uses these skills to help his colleagues do better work.

He is a gifted and amazing person. It was a pleasure to work with him; he is even more of a delight to know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Hurst", written in a cursive style.

Robin Hurst



Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

I am Rossteen Mansouri-Rad, a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago. I have known Hridindu for 19 years, since elementary school. We became best friends the summer before middle school when we attended astronomy camp together and have maintained a strong, close friendship ever since. Hridindu is an outstanding friend who has never wavered in his kindness, generosity, or support for me.

Since childhood Hridindu has always been thoughtful and considerate. He often bought me food when I was short on cash in high school; as an adult, he still generously pays for meals when we are together. When I've been in Madison, he has let me and my girlfriend stay in his home, once even vacating the premises so we would have the place to ourselves. Hridindu has also listened and counseled me through troubled times: romantic challenges, academic challenges, and familial tragedies. He shows up for me and others despite his own struggles. Even while he has been incarcerated, he has patiently listened and guided me through my troubles with romance and interpersonal relationships. He also advises me on career choices and navigating academia. I talk to Hridindu about my most personal issues because he compassionately listens without judgment, then lends sound, rational advice. Hridindu has driven my own personal growth, sharing wisdom and leading by example.

Hridindu has inspired and encouraged me to be more conscientious, less self-focused, and more sensible as I make choices. Hridindu has a strong sense of right and wrong, which he considers intensely and adjusts when he makes mistakes. I always grow from discussing morality with Hridindu; his belief in a world in which fewer people suffer and more people prosper peacefully acts as a compass for me. More than once, Hridindu has been the voice of reason for me and my friends. Our hometown was small and often boring, and occasionally one of our friends would get antsy and consider risky driving or foolish outdoor adventures. Hridindu would discourage these poor choices and lead by example by abstaining from those activities. Even so, when my friend Joseph and I got my truck stuck in the desert by offroad driving after a rain, Hridindu came to our rescue, helping us unbury the car. Whenever someone at a bar began to get belligerent towards women, I've seen Hridindu deescalate the situation and encourage peaceful resolution. When giving dating advice, he explicitly instructed me and my male friends against dishonesty, expressed the importance of consent and respect, and reminded us how our actions affect others.

Regardless of the crime he has taken responsibility for, I know Hridindu is a peaceful person who does not wish anyone harm. When I last saw him before his incarceration, he protected my small dog from being attacked by a much larger dog by putting himself in between them. In December 2019 I recall him dropping everything to come home and take care of his sister in a time of crisis. When we meet people without homes on the street, Hridindu buys them food or hands them any cash he has. Hridindu's kindness builds up communities of friends, which seem to grow larger every time I see him. Our two decades of friendship—in which we visit each other at least three times yearly (I visit him for his birthday, he for mine, and we see each other in New Mexico for Christmas)—is a testament to Hridindu's dedication to his friendships. Hridindu has planted roots in Madison, and his community is as invested in him as he is in them. I have seen that community give him the support he needed to take on his depression and reduce his use of tobacco and alcohol. Hridindu has become a family man with two cats and a home with his partner, and I know the disruption of that growing family has been a great loss to him. He has expressed to me his high motivation to self-improve, take responsibility and follow the law, and resume building a life of safety and security as soon as possible.

Since his incarceration I have been amazed by Hridindu's strength and resiliency. Where I would have most likely given into despair, Hridindu has done his best to smile for his friends and loved ones, which I know is because he doesn't want anyone to worry about him. Even while staving off depression while deprived of his medication, Hridindu focused on making others feel better. Hridindu has made the most of his time, studying foreign languages, history, and art. I am excited to witness and support his ongoing growth and see how he transforms this experience into positive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rossteen Mansouri-Rad', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rossteen Mansouri-Rad



March 22, 2024

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Honorable Judge Conley,

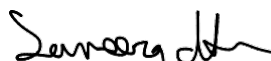
My name is Sameera Ibrahim and I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin- Madison (UW) in the Department of Geography, writing about my knowledge of Hridindu Roychowdhury's character. I first became acquainted with Hridindu as an organizer in 2019 with Teacher Assistants' Association (TAA), a union which seeks to improve labor conditions for graduate students at UW. I worked closely with Hridindu for three years as co-leaders for the TAA's free diaper distribution program and mutual aid committee.

Hridindu's involvement in these organizing efforts speaks to his deep commitments to caring for others and advocating for more just, equitable communities. Through our work together, I have come to know Hridindu as a kind and empathetic individual who is always willing to help others when called upon. Every month for three years without fail, Hridindu selflessly delivered thousands of diapers from the Village Diaper Bank to TAA offices and Eagle Heights Community Center in his truck, often without additional help or reimbursement for costs incurred. Even though Hridindu is not a parent or caregiver himself, he understood how necessary the diaper distribution program was for easing the burden on graduate student parents with limited budgets. Delivering diapers each month took hours of physical labor, time he could have used to complete his doctoral studies or spend with friends and family. I will never forget the time Hridindu helped me go door-to-door at Eagle Heights (where most UW graduate student families live) delivering diapers in sub-zero temperatures in February 2022 with no complaints. He put his own personal comfort aside to ensure parents did not have to wait another day without much-needed diapers. These examples, and many others not described here, illustrate Hridindu's dedication to serving others in his community.

On a more personal level, Hridindu has always been an incredibly generous friend. I don't have a car, and Hridindu never hesitated to offer me rides to social and professional events not reachable by bike or public transportation. More importantly, he never made me feel guilty or like my requests for rides was an undue burden to him. As a friend and colleague of Hridindu, I know him to be extremely reliable and communicative when I've asked for his assistance. I have no doubts Hridindu will continue to be a selfless, generous individual.

Hridindu caused harm through his actions; however, he is taking responsibility through pleading guilty. While his criminal actions do not align with the Hridindu I know and love, I have seen his capacity for accountability and desire to learn and grow from past mistakes. I believe these qualities, combined with a strong support network of friends and loved ones, will make Hridindu a law-abiding man of high character and of value to his community following his sentence.

Sincerely,



Sameera Ibrahim

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

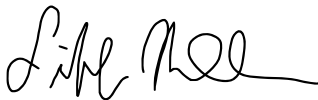
I am writing today about my colleague and friend Hridindu Roychowdhury, who is a generous, loving and kind friend and member of the Madison, WI community.

I met Hridindu at University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I recently completed a Masters in human ecology. We were both involved in the Graduate Workers' Union (TAA) and Hridindu was one of the first people I met and connected with in that organization. I was drawn to Hridindu's warmth and sense of humor. When I was new in the union and in graduate school, Hridindu frequently took the time to check in with me, help me feel included in social and academic spaces, and affirm that the work that I was doing was cool. For example, around that time, I made a collage-like pamphlet that shared some of the work we were doing as the TAA. It was printed and widely distributed by union members, which felt a bit scary as a newcomer – but I remember that Hridindu's support and excitement about the pamphlet, in particular, helped me feel more comfortable with my contribution, even proud. That was over three years ago, but I remember it clearly. Throughout my time in Madison, Hridindu's intelligent warmth and love for his community was apparent. Every time I would see him around town or at a mutual friend's house he would show genuine interest in how I was doing, and I felt the same about him! Even though we weren't the closest of friends, he always made me feel welcome, seen, and supported.

Since his arrest, Hridindu and I have exchanged a few letters. I believe this has brought us closer as friends, which I appreciate, and I have sincerely enjoyed our correspondence. He has maintained good spirits and a positive outlook, and he is quick to joke and be lighthearted (calling me "Sirkka 'High Life' Miller" after we had a conversation about beer, for example). We discuss books and literature at length – it is clear that he has been dedicated to learning and growing while incarcerated. There's always a new novel or non-fiction work to consider, and we've used these as a jumping off point to talk about our own lives and how to be good people in the world. Hridindu is a very skilled communicator, and I have turned to him for relationship advice in these letters and have felt supported by his insights. He also talks about his physical exercise routine and how that has been grounding and a good practice for his mental health.

Of course, Hridindu's incarceration has been incredibly challenging. As I have emphasized, Hridindu is a very good person who cares deeply about his community and the world. The actions to which he has pleaded guilty were a misdirection of this care, and I do not believe he will repeat this behavior given the impact it has had on his life and the lives of those who love him.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sirkka Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sirkka Miller, M.S.

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Taryn McGinn Valley. I am a University of Wisconsin MD/PhD student and Fulbright Scholar currently working in Guatemala. Thank you for considering this letter about my partner Dr. Hridindu Roychowdhury, whom I love. We are building a life together, and soon, I hope, a family. I met Hridindu in February 2017 as my upstairs neighbor, when we were both new to Madison, starting our graduate programs; we have been together for seven years now. You are meeting Hridindu due to one act that does not represent his character. I would like to share a bit about the true Hridindu.

Both of my grandmothers met and adored Hridindu when I proudly brought him to Seattle to meet them a few years ago. My grandma on my mom's side saw exactly what I see in Hridindu the one time they met before her passing. At that point, she was shaky even when using her walker. As Hridindu gently helped her move around the house, she began calling him "my strong, handsome steed." I fondly remember them padding to the living room together, going as slow as she needed. Hridindu is steady. This steadiness is part of what will make him a good father.

Hridindu is very respectful of all beliefs, even those different from his own. I am Catholic and many close relatives of mine would call themselves pro-life. Hridindu flew across the country during the pandemic to attend my grandparents' funeral in their Catholic church; in Madison, he came to Catholic mass to hear me sing, even though it wasn't his tradition, because it meant so much to me. My other grandma, on my dad's side, summarized the shock she felt upon learning what Hridindu had done: "This is not the Hridindu I know." I too was horrified when I learned of his actions, because he had betrayed me and, worse, his own beliefs in peace and acceptance of all people.

But throughout our relationship, when we argue, I've been astounded by Hridindu's consistent ability to admit when he's wrong. The thing that makes him stand out, for me, is that he can say "you're right and I made a mistake," more than anyone else I know. He listens, takes others' perspectives, and has shown me time and again that he is capable of adopting a new approach. We have talked at length about how his crime was closedminded, shortsighted, and harmful to his community. He has shared with me his profound regret. Hridindu's capacity to introspect and move forward wiser has always struck me as special—but I have witnessed him grow dramatically in this area since his arrest. He knows that showing up for people with kindness and openness is the only path to a better world.

As long as I've known him, Hridindu has always believed in pacifism, and I have never known him to wish harm upon anyone. In fact, one of the traits I most admire in Hridindu is his gentleness, with me, his parents, his friends, and strangers. In our conversations since his detention, he is reflecting and refocusing on anti-violence and care as core values. Already, I have seen him prioritize self-improvement; he tells me how excited he is to start anger management training, join book clubs, and enter vocational training while in prison. We talk about how good sobriety has been for his body and brain. We daydream about teaching our children Spanish and Bengali. Hridindu tells me how excited he is to, as he says, "squeeze their little cheeks." We look forward to having children as soon as we can.

Being with Hridindu, planning our life together, makes me better. His love shows me what kind of person I can be. I am so blessed to be able to laugh with him and learn from his humor, gentleness, and cheery morning moods. I miss him every day. Hridindu made a horrible mistake, and he will continue to accept the consequences. I know he will emerge from prison a better man, refocused on caring for his community in person and being a gentle and present father to our future children. I'm grateful to you for taking this time to learn about Hridindu from me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taryn McGinn Valley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Taryn McGinn Valley

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley:

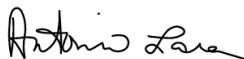
This letter of reference, verification of character, and demonstration of a strong support team is on behalf of Hridindu Roychowdhury. I was a Professor of Chemistry at New Mexico State University. His father was a researcher in the department, and he would bring young Hridindu to work, and, as such, I have known Hridindu and gotten to know his character from the time he was in elementary school. Hridindu would intermingle and socialize with everyone, even adults, at this young age with kindness and ease. Everyone enjoyed his presence, because he was so pleasant, polite, smart, and ready to converse at a surprisingly sophisticated level. He then completed, with the highest honors, a double major in physics and chemistry at NMSU and then traveled to Wisconsin to pursue his PhD in Biochemistry.

At NMSU, I was his instructor, research mentor and co-investigator in a joint physics and chemistry project that involved nuclear magnetic resonance – a monumental task. In an advanced and rigorous course that I taught, Hridindu was the top student. He was also the only student that went to levels above those presented in class and beyond the scope of the text. My colleagues and I all agree that he is one of the most exceptional students that we have ever encountered at NMSU.

His pleasant, polite, and positive demeanor never wavered throughout the entire period that I have known him. I know his aim has always been to help society, especially those struggling to survive; this was a big impetus for him to pursue science. I have seen Hridindu when he has visited home in New Mexico, and he was always the same Hridindu that we all knew and loved. I understand Hridindu made a rash and irresponsible mistake, but I believe he will make positive contributions to society going forward. He has many friends, peers, and academic colleagues that have always respected his determined efforts to succeed in academia. Despite Hridindu's mistake, we all agree that Hridindu will overcome his misconduct and proceed to make positive contributions to society because that is the person he is.

Hridindu has strong family ties, and his parents and sister are in his corner. I am positive that his family, with their strong and honorable values, will lead Hridindu down the correct path henceforth. The same is true of his many peers and friends; we will all be in his corner and earnestly encouraging Hridindu to pursue avenues that are honorable, positive, and in accordance with the law. We truly believe in this young man.

Respectfully,



Dr. Antonio Lara

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry  
New Mexico State University

Honorable William M. Conley  
United States District Court  
Western District of Wisconsin  
120 N. Henry St.  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Judge Conley,

My name is Valerie Lines. I am an archivist and librarian living in Madison, Wisconsin. I first met Hridindu as a graduate student in the TAA union in fall of 2020 where he welcomed me without second thought amidst the raging pandemic. We are friends, neighbors, peers, and dreamers together about how we can try to make our city a better place.

I know Hridindu as a uniquely compassionate person with an unshaken sense of responsibility to his community and to his word. This first was apparent to me from seeing how he interacted with both friends and strangers in the TAA. I saw his compassion and responsibility in action while delivering diapers to fellow graduate student parents. He shared weekly time, collaboration, and consistency by helping fellow graduate workers while he was a full-time PhD candidate; this impressed me. He was always there, reliable and met his word of distributing the needed resources.

Hridindu has strong convictions and is passionate about what he believes in, but those passions and beliefs are not dogmatic. When he is presented with alternatives or someone pushes back against a claim or idea, he will truly listen, even when the pushback is a strongly held belief. For example, during diaper distribution meetings with diverse members and opinions, I witnessed and participated in disagreements around what the “best way” to do something was. There was a significant disagreement between members of the committee whether to deliver diapers to parents or facilitate a central location and pickup. He was a strong supporter of the direct delivery method for reasons tied to the benefit of the recipients. For a variety of reasons, brought up by me and others in the committee meeting, he shifted his energies from advocating for delivery to working to strengthen the central distribution model. It was clear to me he listened to what we had to say and took it not only into consideration, but into action when presented with better options for all parties. This ability to change ones’ beliefs based on feedback is a quality that I do not often see in people around me. Hridindu is receptive to change and input from others, a quality I highly value and try myself to emulate.

While I feel disappointed that Hridindu committed the crime he pled guilty to, my trust in him is firm. I know that I can trust him to take responsibility for those actions, to learn and grow, and to return to his community as a better man. The community that has stayed and grown beside him through this incarceration is one that I know will hold him to a higher standard. I believe that he will not commit a crime again because he listens, truly listens to the concerns of those around him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Lines". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Valerie Lines